

has weeded out softies, men are given anti-Jap combat tactics — firsthand from the Far East, where Marines have fought from Bataan to the Indies. They showed what they could do at Wake, with only 400 men. Soon the corps will number 100,000.

The Leathernecks get their first practice in landing from high wooden landing stages, built at the edge of the water, that serve as dummy ships. Huge cargo nets are strung on the sides, like dozens of rope ladders, extending down to the boats. It isn't an easy job, going down a cargo net with a rifle. It means weeks of strenuous practice, coordination, timing.

### Ready For Anything

ONCE they have the operation letter-perfect, they progress to real landings on all kinds of terrain — open beaches, wooded slopes, jungle shores and precipitous rocks. Month after month preparations go on, in dark and daylight, rain and fog, in tropical heat and bitter cold.

Toughness, American style. Not the fanatic brutality of the Japs. Not the die-for-the-Leader creed of Adolf Hitler. Something a lot better than that. The ability to take it in big doses and come up grinning.

The most timid defeatist would lose some of his gloom if he could see this training. An Axis agent looking for Hitler's "decadent Americans" would be rudely jolted. And this is only the basic training.

The Marine Aviation Force, already distinguished in the defense of Wake Island, fits closely into all attack plans: observation units, to penetrate camouflage and spot hidden positions; bombers, to hit front-line positions during beach attacks, to block reinforcements and blast strategic points in the rear; fighters, to cover landing-parties. Constant practice has co-ordinated air and ground forces into a powerful team.

Other members of this team are the parachutists and the new Marine Corps glider troops, who will serve as the spearhead of assault. The size of this new glider force is a secret, but it can be said that the aerial troop carriers will be used on a large scale.

All invasion steps — reconnaissance, convoys, sea, air and land attacks — are interconnected with the precision of a jigsaw puzzle.

Jap successes have resulted from years of such planning — equipment, tactics, timing. Each area was minutely studied by spies. America has employed no undercover agents, but the Marine Corps has ways of obtaining vital information.

Maps, photographs and reports are secured from every reliable source. The Marine Corps' keenest strategists have mapped out the plans, plans for victory with minimum losses.

When the time is right, a secret order will be flashed:

"Prepare for attack on D-Day, at H-Hour."

Staff officers of the attacking force assemble all available information on the Japanese defenses. Every item is carefully weighed and analyzed. Then the size of the force needed is computed — the men, planes, tanks, guns, supplies and convoy ships.

Final preparations are as secret as possible. The Marine Corps transports are loaded quietly, in reverse — tanks, barges, artillery to be used first are hoisted aboard last. Hundreds of collapsible rubber boats are stowed on the transport. Inflated, each boat holds a squad with full equipment.

A dark night, sudden orders, and the troops are swiftly put aboard. At sea, away

from watchful Axis agents, they meet the Navy escort.

With radio transmitters sealed, the convoy steams ahead. Destroyers constantly circle the slower ships. Ahead, the scouting force patrols ocean and sky. Enemy patrols, if encountered, must be destroyed before they can spot the main force.

Boilers at forced draft, the convoy makes the last night's run. Creeping the final few miles, the blacked-out ships reach the jump-off position. In total darkness, the Marines gulp down a light breakfast, with plenty of hot coffee. Equipment set, they gather on deck.

H-Hour! Over go the rubber boats, already inflated. Standard landing boats begin to tow them toward shore, engines muffled at low speed. Behind them, lighters are quickly loaded with mechanized equipment and machine-guns. Still farther to the rear, plane crews, chutists and glider forces are making ready to take off. Aboard the warships, turret-crews man the big guns.

Some distance off shore, the motored towing craft cast off the rubber boats. The first vague gray of dawn finds the first assault wave paddling in.

Suddenly hell breaks loose!

Shells scream overhead as fleet guns rain a furious barrage on the beach defenses. Hidden mines blow up, barbed wire and barricades disintegrate. The motor landing boats speed in with the mechanized equipment. The roar of swiftly-approaching support planes adds to the din.

The barrage is timed to lift just before the first rubber boats hit the beach. But as the Marines leap out into action, guns from a Jap pillbox start their clatter. By schedule, the Marine dive-bombers howl down now, replacing the barrage, smashing the beach defenses.

### Second Wave Strikes

AS MOTORBOATS near the beach with the second assault wave, Jap batteries on a knoll open fire. Shells churn the sea. Two boats are swamped before smoke-screen boats cut across in front of the landing-party.

Out of this smoke screen, alligators (huge amphibious tanks at home on land or water) roll onto the beach and charge off, straight into the fight. Motorized lighters land artillery and armored cars.

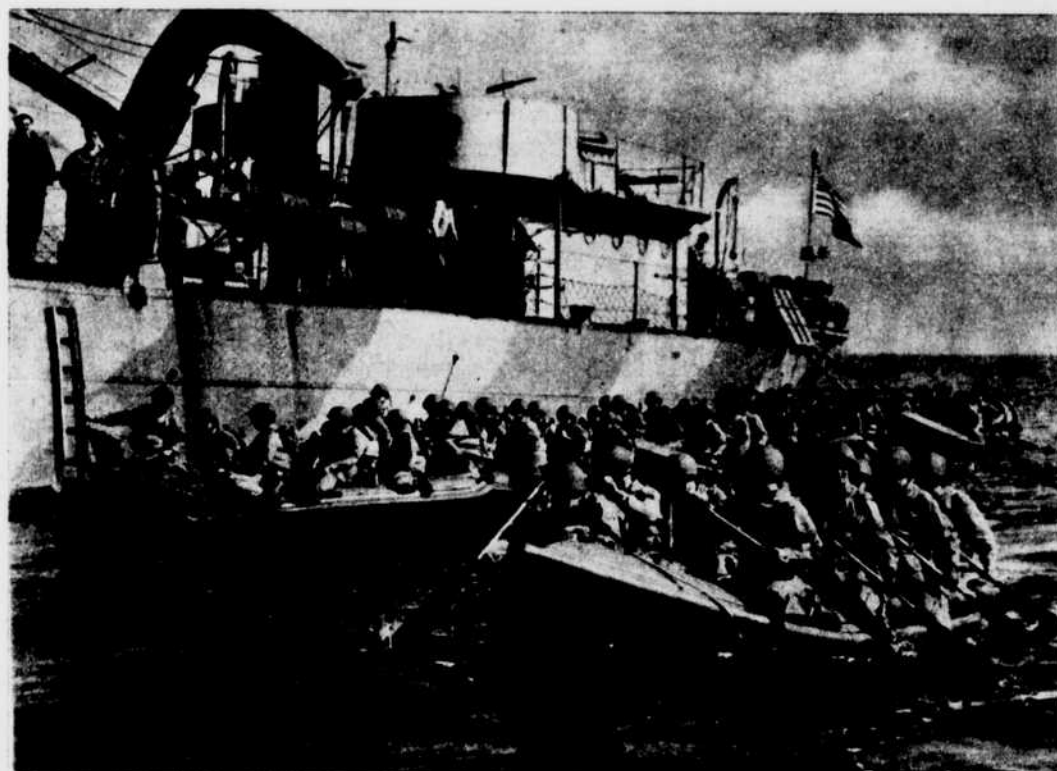
Behind the Jap lines, waves of parachutists are dropped at strategic points. By the time the first landing party reaches the beach, the chutists will probably be in action. Striking at Jap airfields, dumps, roads, communications, they will create havoc, may paralyze all enemy reinforcement. Troop gliders, loaded with "Commandos," will then concentrate on disrupting enemy rear lines, hitting at bridges, headquarters, communications, airfields. Another force may land on a separate beach, to flank the Japs. A third unit of glider troops may reinforce the first assault wave. Last-moment orders, by radio from a command plane, will enable their use at the most important spot.

If Jap air defenses can be quickly crippled, the fleet will move in closer and turn its big guns on distant rear lines. It won't be long, then, before the landing force will have gained control. Then a holding force can take over, releasing the shock troops for similar attacks on other islands.

That's the pattern. It's a tough job at best — and the Leathernecks know it. But they also know that they're ready. Perhaps earlier than you expect, you'll be reading:

"The Marines have landed..."

The End



OVER THE SIDE. Landing troops man collapsible rubber boats, run for shore



INTO ACTION. Bayonets fixed, they plunge forward to take enemy pillboxes



ALLIGATORS. These land-water tanks follow close, charge headlong into fight

U. S. MARINE CORPS